



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## press release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### TRADE BAN LIFTED ON KANGAROOS

A 6-year ban on U.S. commercial trade in kangaroos has been lifted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service following a 1-year review. After two years, the Interior agency will reevaluate the situation, including the status of the animals.

The ban was lifted in a final rule to be published in the April 29, 1981, Federal Register. The decision was based on evidence that the three largest kangaroo species have reached healthy numbers and are being properly managed in Australia. The action was proposed in the June 16, 1980, Federal Register and was the subject of a public hearing and two comment periods.

"After this lengthy review, we are satisfied that the kangaroo is adequately protected in Australia and that carefully monitored trade can be allowed safely at this time," Dr. Eugene Hester, Acting Deputy Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, said.

The three kangaroo species--the red and eastern and western gray--will continue to be classified as "threatened," a less serious category than endangered status. Dr. Hester said this was being done as a "prudent course" so that commercial trade can be closed down if problems arise.

When the trade ban was imposed December 30, 1974, with the listing of the kangaroos as threatened, the animals were just recovering from prolonged drought and also were being exploited by unregulated commercial trade. At that time, the Fish and Wildlife Service said it would lift the ban when it

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determined that Australia had implemented an effective management program, including control of trade so that it would not be detrimental to overall kangaroo populations.

Now, according to the most reliable data available to the Service, Australia's adult kangaroos number more than 32 million. In addition, integrated management programs have been implemented by the national government and the four states that expect to export kangaroo hides to U.S. markets (Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia). The programs include population surveys, annual harvest quotas, and strict control of the harvest and commercial trade through permits, licenses, standardized tagging, regular reporting, and monitoring of interstate and foreign shipment of hides.

The Endangered Species Act, under its two-tiered system of classifying species as either endangered or threatened, also provides flexibility for designing special rules for threatened species. The special rules, tailored to a species' particular conservation needs, can include regulated taking and commercial trade, as is also the case with some American alligators.

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